

1. (Amended) An apparatus for applying the heat-transfer label of a heat-transfer label assembly onto an object, said apparatus comprising:

A1
a. a decorating unit for applying the heat-transfer label onto the object, said decorating unit comprising a heated contact plate which includes an elongated, flat contact surface, said heated contact plate being adapted to pivot during label transfer so that the elongated, flat contact surface of the heated contact plate continuously urges the heat-transfer label into contact with the object; and

b. a conveying mechanism for advancing and supporting the object during label transfer.

A2
4. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the contact plate comprises a heating plate and a rubber layer mounted on said heating plate.

A3
8. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 7 wherein said decorating unit further comprises an elongated heated preheater for heating the heat-transfer label before label transfer.

A4
12. (Amended) A decorating unit for applying the heat-transfer label of a heat-transfer label assembly onto an object, said decorating unit comprising:

a. a preheater for heating the heat-transfer label assembly before label transfer;

b. a heated contact plate which includes an elongated, flat contact surface, said heated contact plate being adapted to pivot during label transfer so that the elongated, flat contact surface of the heated contact plate continuously urges the heat-transfer label into contact with the object; and

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b. a transport assembly for advancing the heat-transfer label assembly from said preheater to said heated contact plate.

A5
15. (Amended) The decorating unit of claim 12 wherein said heated contact plate includes a rubber layer which is constructed of an 80 durometer silicone.

18. (Amended) An apparatus for applying the transfer label of a transfer label assembly onto an object, said apparatus comprising:

A6
a. a decorating unit for applying the label onto the object, said decorating unit comprising a contact plate which includes an elongated, flat contact surface, said heated contact plate being adapted to pivot during label transfer so that the elongated, flat contact surface of the heated contact plate continuously urges the transfer label into contact with the object; and

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b. a conveying mechanism for advancing and supporting the object during label transfer.

Please add the following new claims 19-21:

19. (New) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the heated contact plate includes a pivot point about which the heated contact plate is capable of pivoting.

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20. (New) The decorating unit of claim 12 wherein the heated contact plate includes a pivot point about which the heated contact plate is capable of pivoting.

21. (New) The ~~decorating unit~~ of claim 18 wherein the contact plate includes a pivot point about which the contact plate is capable of pivoting.

22. (New) An apparatus for applying the heat-transfer label of a heat-transfer label assembly onto an object, said apparatus comprising:

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- a. a decorating unit for applying the heat-transfer label onto the object, said decorating unit comprising a heated contact plate which includes a contact surface extending nearly its entire length, said heated contact plate being adapted to pivot during label transfer so that the contact surface of the heated contact plate continuously urges the heat-transfer label into contact with the object; and
 - b. a conveying mechanism for advancing and supporting the object during label transfer.

Please cancel claims 2, 3, 13 and 14 without prejudice.

REMARKS

The references cited by the Examiner in the rejections of the claims along with the Examiner's comments have been diligently studied. Reconsideration of the application in light of this amendment is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 4, 8, 12, 15 and 18 have been amended. Claims 2, 3, 13 and 14 have been canceled. New claims 19-22 have been added. Therefore, claims 1, 4-12 and 15-22 are under active consideration.